

ART. X.—*The Burbung of the New England Tribes,
New South Wales.*

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(Communicated by Professor Baldwin Spencer).

[Read 9th July, 1896.]

In pursuing my professional duties as a surveyor in various parts of the New England district of New South Wales during a number of years past, I frequently met and was intimately acquainted with many of the head men of the native tribes scattered over that portion of the country, and took advantage of these opportunities to collect all the available details respecting their initiation ceremonies. As the result of my own observations, and from information obtained from the natives, I have prepared what it is hoped will be found a correct and tolerably full account of the ceremonies carried out amongst the tribes who occupied a strip of elevated country along the main dividing range, from about Moonbi to Ben Lomond, comprising what is called the "Table Land" of New England. The territory of these tribes extended down the eastern side of this range perhaps as far as Walcha, Hillgrove and Oban. On the west of the main range they included Bendemeer, and reached almost to Bundarra and Inverell, adjoining the Kamilaroi tribes all the way. The principal dialects spoken by them are the *Norvan* and *Yunggai*. They have the Kamilaroi organisation, being divided into four classes, with uterine descent, but the class names are different from those of the Kamilaroi tribes.* This part of the subject will be dealt with by me in another paper.

Generally speaking, the reader is invited to remember that, although the main features of the initiation ceremonies obtaining over a wide area may be essentially the same, there are several local variations in some of the details in different parts of it.

* See my paper on "The Kamilaroi Class System of the Australian Aborigines." Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc. Aust. (t.), x., 18-24, Plate I.

This is more especially true of the Kamilaroi and Wiradthuri tribes, occupying extensive tracts in the interior of New South Wales, whose ceremonies of initiation have been described by me elsewhere.* Even in the small strip of country occupied by the New England tribes, it is found that the Burbung of the southern half of the district is somewhat different in a few of the details to that of the northern half.

The Main Camp and Burbung Ground.—The locality selected for the main encampment is generally situated on a moderately level piece of ground, not far from water, and where plenty of wood for fuel is obtainable. It is also chosen in a part of the tribal territory where game is sufficiently abundant to afford a food supply for the people who are in attendance while the ceremonies last. The local tribe are the first to erect their quarters, and the other contingents who have been invited encamp around this as a datum point, each in the direction of the country from which they have come.

Every evening after dusk, and every morning at or before daylight, a bullroarer is sounded by one of the single men in the vicinity of the camp, and when this is heard, the men raise a shout in unison, and the elderly women commence to sing and beat their rugs as an accompaniment to their chants.

Adjacent to the main camp, a slightly oval or circular space, called *ūrfaubang*, about thirty feet in diameter, is cleared of all timber and grass, and the loose soil scraped off the surface in making it level is used to form the raised earthen embankment which surrounds it. This embankment is about a foot high, and is about eighteen inches wide at the base, tapering upwards to a narrow ridge along the top.

A narrow pathway (*indyoona*) leads from this circle to another cleared space of somewhat smaller dimensions, about a quarter of a mile distant, in a secluded part of the forest. This circle is likewise bounded by a raised earthen wall like the other one, and within it are two heaps of earth about a foot high, on the top of

* "The Bora, or Initiation Ceremonies of the Kamilaroi Tribe," *Journ. Anthrop. Inst.*, xxiv., 411-427; *Ibid.*, xxv., 318-339. "The Burbung of the Wiradthuri Tribes," *Journ. Anthrop. Inst.*, xxv., 295-318.

each of which a fire, called *toómeeoóroo*, is kept burning.* Where the pathway meets each of these circles, there is an opening about two or three feet wide left in the embankment as an entrance to the space within.

On approaching the farther ring, on either side of the path above described are some tracks of an emu's foot cut in the ground, the outline of an iguana formed of raised earth, and some other figures. The bark on the boles of a number of trees around this ring are marked with various wavy, zig-zag and oval patterns cut with a tomahawk. This marking is called *moombeera* or *mahendec*. Not far from the pathway, and in close proximity to the marked trees, is the horizontal figure of a man, larger than life size, lying prone on the ground. He is formed of raised earth, with a layer of mud or clay on the upper surface, and is called *Goign* or *Baiamai*.

Mustering the Tribes.—The messengers who are sent out to gather the tribes carry a bullroarer, some tails, boomerangs, and white stones. When a messenger gets near the camp of a tribe he has been instructed to summon, he waits till it is evening, and then approaches it quietly and swings his bullroarer. When the old men hear this they commence to sing "Birr! birr!" and go to the messenger and conduct him to the men's camp. He briefly tells them where he has come from, and postpones the rest of his message till the following morning.

Next morning he goes with the chief men to the *lóata*, or private meeting-place of the men, and there he produces his emblems of authority and hands them to the head men. If, as is generally the case, they are all agreeable to join the Burbung gathering, they accept the emblems, and the messenger goes back to the head man who sent him and reports the result of his mission. When the time arrives to start for the appointed meeting-place, all the men, women and children are mustered up, and the journey is commenced towards the Burbung ground, dances and songs being indulged in at the various camping-places along the route. When this concourse arrives almost in sight of the main camp, a stoppage is made, to give them an opportunity for preparing to meet the people already assembled there. Their

* In some parts of the district there is only one heap of earth in this circle, with a fire burning on top.

baggage is laid down, and the men approach the small ring in single file, their bodies being painted in squares and ovals in white and red colours. They generally arrive in the evening, but sometimes early in the morning. They enter the ring and go round in single file till they are all within it, and sit down on the embankment, with their faces towards the country from which they have come. One of them now sounds a bullroarer,* and the men belonging to the ground, who may be called the "hosts," then come along the track from the camp and also enter the ring and walk round, keeping inside the strange men who are sitting on the bank. Here they come to a stand, each man looking towards the big ring. The hosts know what district the new mob are from by the direction in which their faces are turned, and the new mob know the hosts are the people belonging to the ground, because they stand looking in that direction—but neither party speak a word.

The new men then get up and walk round the hosts, and start away along the track towards the urfanbang. Each man breaks two small boughs, one of which he carries in each hand, and sways them in the air at intervals as he walks along. Some of them may carry a boomerang in one hand, and a bush in the other. On arriving at the ring, they find the women of the hosts dancing within it, and the new men enter it and dance round the women. Everybody, men and women, then come out of the ring.

The women of the strangers, who had walked on to the larger ring when their men went to the small one, are sitting down outside the embankment, waiting. When the hosts' women come out, these new women, accompanied by the novices of their tribe, enter the ring. The men of the hosts, who have followed the other men from the small ring, and also carrying boughs in their hands, then march in round them. The strange women then come out, and their men go in. The men of both tribes, being now all in the ring, pull the leaves off their green boughs and throw them in the air, letting them fall on the ground, at the same time calling out the names of the principal places, Burbung grounds, etc., in their country. After this, all the men come out

* Sometimes the arrivals take place in the very early morning, at or before daylight, and the hosts are roused out by the sound of the bullroarer at the farther ring.

of the ring, and the new mob of men and women go and pitch their camp. If they had left any baggage behind when they came in sight, they would go back and bring it up. The novices, if any, in the new mob go with the women. The fathers of the novices have a mark of red paint on their foreheads or faces, so that the men at the camp may see them, and by this means learn at a glance how many new boys have been brought in this contingent. If a man have two sons to be initiated, he will have two marks on his face.

Taking away the Boys.—Early in the morning which has been decided upon for taking the boys away, the head men proceed to the sacred ring and hold a discussion as to the most convenient place to remove the main camp to. The place proposed by the tribe which has brought the greatest number of boys is generally agreed upon, provided it is otherwise suitable. When this point is settled, they all go back along the track in single file to the large ring, from which they disperse to their several camps. All the women and children are then gathered up close to the ring, and the painting of the novices is proceeded with.

The men who are to take charge of the ceremonies in the bush go away again to the small ring and paint their bodies jet black with powdered charcoal, or the bark of certain trees charred in the fire. The two men who are to use the bullroarers also see that the strings of these instruments are in good order.

The painting of the novices is done by the mothers and sisters of each boy. He is painted all over with red ochre and grease; even the hair of his head, and also his rug, are painted red. One of the novice's male relatives then comes forward and fastens a belt around his waist, to which are attached two tails or kilts, one before and one behind. He is then conducted into the ring, and is placed sitting down on the embankment—the boys of each tribe being placed by themselves on that side of the ring which is nearest their own country. The mother and sisters of each novice are just outside the embankment, sitting in such a position as just to be able to touch him with their feet. All the women and children are told to lie down and keep still, and are then covered over with rugs and bushes, which had been cut and placed in readiness for the purpose.

One of the head men now goes along the group of boys, bending their heads down, and throws a rug over each boy, so that they can only see the ground at their feet. The sound of the bullroarer is then heard in the direction of the smaller ring, and it quickly gets nearer. Two men are engaged in this duty, one on each side of the pathway connecting the two circles.

The guardians now step forward and lead the boys away out of the ring, and away along the track to the beginning of the marked trees, where they are placed lying on the ground, the group of boys belonging to each tribe having their heads pointing in the direction of their own country. In some instances the heads of all the novices are in the direction of sun-set. Here they are covered over with rugs, and are kept about a quarter or half an hour, till the women depart from the large ring, as will be described presently.

The boys are then helped to rise, and the rugs are adjusted over their heads in such a manner that a small opening is left at the face, the rug projecting at each side like a hood. This is done in order to prevent the boys from seeing anything except what is straight in front of them. One of the men then pretends to see a locust or bird, or something of the kind, in the air in the direction of the sun, and requests the boys to try if they can see it. Having looked intently for some time, their eyes are so much dazzled by the glare of the sun that they cannot see anything distinctly for a good while afterwards, and everything around them has a strange appearance.

While their eyes are suffering from the effects of the sun's rays, the guardians take them along the track and show them everything marked on the ground and on the trees. When they come to each marked tree, the men stoop down and scratch the loose leaves away from its base, and rub their hands upon it, at the same time inviting the novices to take particular notice of the moombeera cut upon it.

Removal of the Main Camp.—I must now return to the women who were left at the large ring. As soon as the novices were out of sight, the rugs and other coverings were taken off the women and children by some old men who remained in charge of them, and they were told to rise to their feet. On looking at the

deserted ring, the mothers and sisters of the novices generally feel very tristful, and vent their feelings by crying.

All the women and children, and such of the men as have remained with them, pack up all their moveables, and prepare for a start to another camp, the site of which had previously been fixed by the head men after discussion among themselves. Before leaving the camp, they fix a mark as a guide to any other tribes who may not have yet arrived. This is done by inserting a pole, eight or ten feet long, upright in the ground inside of the ring, the top of it being ornamented by having a bunch of leaves tied to it. On the shaft of this vertical pole, about four or five feet from the ground, another pole or stick about three or four feet long is lashed to it at right angles, pointing in the direction of the new camp. If there be a turn in the way leading to the latter, a stick having a corresponding bend in it would be used for the horizontal pole: and if the way to the new camp passed over creeks, their position would be indicated on the horizontal pole by means of pieces of stick tied across it, equal in number and in relative positions to the creeks to be passed over.

A somewhat similar guide is left by the men at the small ring. They cut a pole, which may consist of a tall sapling growing near about twenty feet long, and lean it in the low fork of another sapling, perhaps six feet high, in such a way that the elevated end points in the direction in which the boys were taken into the bush, the other end of the pole resting on the ground. Close by this slanting pole they also make marks on the surface of the ground, by means of small poles or sticks laid horizontally round a centre, representing all the tribes who are present—one of these sticks pointing in the direction of the country from which each tribe has come. Those tribes which have not yet arrived are not represented, but a space or opening is left where their pole ought to be. This index is called *aradna*.

Having made these preparations, the men, women and children proceed to the site chosen for the new camp, which is called *Ahrowang*. The people of the local tribe are the first to select their quarters, around which the other tribes take up their respective positions, each in the direction of the country they have come from.

A short distance from this main camp a piece of level ground is selected and cleared of sticks and loose rubbish, and in the middle of it two fires are lit, about twenty yards apart. This place is called *Aychowal*. Around these fires the mothers and sisters of the novices dance every evening accompanied by all the women and children of the tribes present. None of the men participate in these dances at the *Aychowal*. The last night before the boys are brought back the women dance and sing around these fires nearly all night.

The morning following the establishment of this new camp, one of the old men, accompanied by one or two of the elder women, pay a visit to the original camp. The man goes to the small ring and cuts a nick in the long slanting pole already described, to show that all the people have been gone away one day. One of the women also marks the upright pole at the large ring with one nick, conveying the same meaning. The nick cut by the man is horizontal, that cut by the woman in the other pole is vertical, the women not being allowed to mark their pole in the same way as the men mark theirs. This marking of the poles would be continued for some days, until the tribes expected had either arrived, or it was thought they did not intend to be present.

I will now endeavour to explain the use and meaning of these poles:—It sometimes happens that a tribe may be delayed on the road by rain or floods, or other causes, and arrive a day or two after the boys have been taken away. On arriving at the main camp and finding it deserted, the initiated men would all proceed to the small ring, and the women, novices, and children to the large one, where they would see the poles erected, letting them know how many days previously the main mob had left. The sticks laid upon the ground, radiating round a common centre, would let the men see what tribes were present, and also what tribes, if any, are still missing. They would then add another stick, pointing in the direction of the country they had themselves come from. The men would then go from the small ring along the track, looking at everything as they went, and join their women and boys at the other ring. All of them would then start in the direction indicated by the poles, and on coming up to the new camp they

would march into the side nearest their own country and erect their quarters. The men who had remained with the women at the new camp would go over to the new mob of men and tell them all the particulars of the Burbung, and the women of the new tribe would also enter into conversation with the other women. After awhile some of the men of the new mob would perhaps wish to start out to the bush for the purpose of joining the mob who had charge of the novices, and if they did not know the country one or more of the other men would go out with them. If the new men are well acquainted with the country, a number of them might start into the bush from the small ring, in the first instance, in the direction indicated by the pole, and let their women and the rest of the men go on to the new camp as just stated. In either case these men would join the people in the bush as described at page 123.

Ceremonies in the Bush.—When the boys have been shown all the moombeera, they are conducted to the small ring, and march once round it, and then a start is made for the bush. All the men who go with them are painted black all over with powdered charcoal as already stated.

On the journey into the bush, the boys walk with their heads down alongside of their guardians. By the way the *endahmaran* play, for the amusement of the boys, is gone through. It consists of a number of men climbing into the branches of a tree and catching on with their legs, hang head downwards, in imitation of flying foxes. The first night they form a camp in the bush consisting of a yard in the shape of a horseshoe, made of boughs or bark, with two fires in front of it, and beyond these a space is cleared. They remain here about three nights, games being played on the cleared space on the other side of the fire every night. Bullroarers are occasionally sounded during the evenings by one of the men. These games consist of imitating the opossum—making a noise like that animal—the wombat, rooting the ground and turning logs and sticks over—the bandicoot—the wallaby. During the day the men go out hunting, the boys remaining in the camp with their guardians.

At this camp a small quantity of human excrement is given to the boys, and occasionally they have to drink urine out of a coolamin. If a boy wants to micturate the first night, he must

do it in the rug he is lying in; next night he is allowed to micturate in one of the fires; and the third and last night he does it in the other fire. He must communicate his wish by touching his guardian, who then helps him to his feet and leads him to the fire.

Having remained here the required time a shift is made early in the afternoon to another camp, the boys being conducted by their guardians in the same manner as before. This new camp is formed in the shape of the letter V, the apex pointing in the direction of the women's camp. It is formed of bark or bushes according as to whether the weather is wet or fine. There are two fires in front of it, like the last camp, and a clear space beyond the fires for a corroboree ground. Besides the two fires for corroborees, the men and boys may have several other fires close to where they are lying, to keep them warm during the night or day. This camp is called *Rooingat* or "playing place." The plays represent pheasants scratching the rubbish into heaps, wonga pigeons, wild turkeys, kangaroos, fish, bears, iguanas, bees.

The men and boys camp round inside the V-shaped wall, and when the play is going on at the other side of the fire the boys are placed sitting in front of it, so that they can look at the men playing. During the day, the men go out hunting to obtain food, the boys remaining lying or sitting in the camp, some of their guardians being present all the time. In the evening the guardians and other men prepare food for the novices by removing all bone and sinew from the flesh while it is being cooked. If a boy wants to micturate he does it in one of the fires the first time, and in the other fire the next time, alternating between the two fires. If he wants to evacuate, he is taken out by his guardian a few yards from the camp, and the matter covered over when he is done. During every night of the sojourn of the boys in the bush, the bullroarer is sounded by one of the men somewhere out of sight.

When the men have been at this camping place a few days, some men, *goomat*, meaning dingo, come from the women's camp (*Ahrowang*). When these men get near the Rooingat camp, they commence cooeing in imitation of the dingo, or native dog, and are answered by a shout from the camp. When

they get in sight they form into single file and advance in a line. Each man has a bush which he holds in front of him, so as to hide the upper part of his body. The boys are helped to get up and are stood in a row between their camp and the fires. When the goomat men reach the camp, they come round one end of it, and form a row on the opposite side of the fire to that on which the boys are standing. They then throw down their bushes and dance for a brief time before the novices, and then go into the rooingat camp and sit down. The rooingat men then go out, and, picking up the bushes brought by the goomat, strip all the leaves off them, dancing and making a great noise by shouting "Wah! wah!" all the time they are breaking off the leaves.

Some of the goomat men remain with the men in the bush, the others return to the women's camp. Those who intended remaining had painted themselves jet black on the way out, but those who intended to return were not painted. These goomat men reach the bush camp about the middle of the day. More than one lot of goomat men may visit the camp in the bush, and the formalities observed on each occasion are the same.

When it is determined to remove from the rooingat camp, the wall at the apex of the V-shaped enclosure is thrown down, and the men and boys march out through the breach and proceed in the direction of the women's camp to another place, where they erect a camp all in one line. Only one night is spent in this camp, and the men remain up nearly all the night, playing different animals and singing. Next morning the men form a semi-circle, dancing in front of the boys, who are put standing in a row, and two men step into the clear space and swing bullroarers. The blankets are then lifted off the heads of the novices, and they are told to look. The chief men then advance, and, stepping up quite close to the boys in a menacing attitude, threaten them that if ever they divulge anything which they have seen or heard in the bush, they will lose their lives either by the hands of their fellows or by supernatural agency.

After this all hands remove from that place, still going towards the women's camp, till they come to a water-hole, where a halt is made. On the way from the last camp to this place, the novices have been allowed to carry their heads erect and look about them.

The men play the crow, imitating that bird, and then play the dingo, scratching back dirt with their feet. After this all the "black" men go into the water and wash the black paint off themselves; the guardians also go in, but the novices sit on the bank watching them. When the men come out of the water, they singe the hair short on the boys' heads, and also off other parts of their bodies; the hair of the men is not singed. Everybody, including the boys, then paint themselves white with pipeclay, which is diluted with a small quantity of water in a *coolamin*. The men and boys assist each other in this painting, which must extend all over their bodies, including the hair of their heads. The whole party being now painted with pipeclay, may for distinction be called "the white mob." If there are any dogs in the party, they have a white streak of pipeclay marked down their forehead to the point of the nose. The men and boys now catch hands and form a ring, to see what space they will occupy, being a kind of drill so that they may know their work when they reach the women's camp presently.

The shrill, cooeeying sound of the goomat men coming from the women's camp is now heard, and one of the white men swing a bullroarer in reply. The novices are placed standing in a row in a clear piece of ground facing in the direction of the women's camp. The goomat now advance in single file, each man carrying a bough in front of him as before described, and form a line facing the novices. The goomat men now throw down their bushes and go through a short dance. The "white" men step forward and pick up the bushes which the others have thrown down and pull the leaves off them, scattering them about, making a great noise, as previously described.

The head man of the goomat mob now asks the "white men" to form into a ring by joining their hands, in order that he may see the size of the ring, for the purpose of assisting him in placing the women round the fires. The goomat men now take their departure and return to the women's camp at the Aychowal.

When the mob started out to the bush to meet the men and boys at the water-hole, the women replenished the fires and cut a number of green boughs, which they laid in a line between one fire and another. On the return of the goomat all the women and children are mustered by the men and are placed lying down

outside the fires, and are then covered over with rugs, blankets and bushes. A few of the head men of the camp mob remain standing round the fires watching the women.

Return of the Boys.—When all is ready the “white mob” make their appearance in single file, the boys and their guardians being in the lead—a guardian being in front with his novice behind him, then another guardian followed by his novice, and so on. Before coming in sight of the camp they laid down everything they were carrying, and now have nothing in their hands. A large bullroarer, Boolpee, would be sounded in the rear by one of the goomat men as this mob approached. This would be about the middle of the day.

When the front man gets within such a distance of the point midway between the two fires as he estimates to be the radius of the circle, he turns to one side and the others follow him. When about half the mob have gone to this side, the men who are still coming turn the contrary way, going round to meet the first man. When all the men and boys are in their places, they catch each others hands and form a complete circle which may be called the “white ring,” round the women and the fires. They do all this as quietly as possible, so that the women may not hear them coming in. Some of the goomat men are standing outside the “white ring” directing the proceedings, having estimated the size of the ring by having seen it formed at the water-hole in the bush.

The head men now give orders for the women to get up, and each mother then looks around for her son. Having his hair cut off, and being painted white, sometimes so alters his appearance that his mother cannot readily recognise him. Some of the goomat men perhaps indicate the son’s position. Each boy has a nose peg made of kangaroo bone through the septum of his nose, or carried in his mouth, to further assist in distinguishing them from the other men. Each mother goes close to her son, and catching one of her breasts in her hand raises it towards him, and he bends his head and pretends to suck it. The sisters of the novice also approach him, and rub their feet on his feet and ankles. The mothers then rub their hands on their sons, and on all their male relations, pretending to rub the white paint off. Every man in the “white ring” will be rubbed in this way, after

which the mothers and all the women pass out of the ring under the men's arms, and stand a few paces away to witness the remainder of the performance.

The men forming the "white ring" now close in, and commence throwing the bushes on the fires. They commence midway between the two fires and take the bushes each way, some being thrown on one fire and some on the other.* The boys do nothing. Each guardian, assisted by the men near him, then lifts his novice in his arms, and holds him in the smoke arising from the smouldering of the green bushes. Half the boys are smoked at one fire and half at the other. While the men are holding the boys up in the smoke, the former keep repeating "Birr! birr!" and the women exclaim "Heh! heh!" The guardians and other men stand on the bushes and the smoke ascends around them and the boys. As each novice is held up by his guardian, he shakes his breast.

As soon as the novices are smoked they catch each other's hands and run away to the place where the swags were left when approaching the camp shortly before. The signal for them to run away in this manner is when they hear the men clapping their hands. When the women hear this clapping they turn their backs so that they will not see the boys running away.

The guardians go after the boys, and some of the other "white" men follow them a short distance and return to the fires. The smoking ceremony is then completed, and the "white" men go back to the place where they left their swags, and bring them into the main camp. The guardians and boys remain where the swags were left all night. It is only the men and boys who were out in the bush, whom I have called the "white mob," who are smoked; the Goomat and other men belonging to the women's camp are not smoked, but are standing around assisting the head men in carrying out the various formalities.

Next day a lot of rugs, equal in number to the novices, are laid in a line on the ground, and two coolamins of water are placed alongside. The mothers of the boys and all the women are close by this, and as the guardians approach with the boys the women commence shouting, "Heh! heh!" and throw pieces

*One fire only is used at the Aychowal in some parts of New England.

of bark at them, which the guardians ward off. The boys are conducted to the rugs and sit down upon them, and the guardians give them a drink out of a coolamin. The guardians and novices then go back to their own camp, and the women return to theirs. Any of the men who were present also go back to their respective camps.

Final Ceremonies.—On the following morning, the strange tribes who are present make preparations for taking their departure, and in the course of a few days they are all on their way back to their own hunting grounds. The remainder of the initiatory rites are completed by each tribe upon their own boys when they get back to their respective districts. On their way thither, they are not permitted to come near the women or children, but are kept by themselves in the custody of their guardians. As these final ceremonies are the same for each tribe, the details relating to the local mob only will now be stated.

In about a week's time after the meeting at the Aychowal fire, the boys are brought, all marching abreast, to a place where the men have lit two fires similar to those at the "white ring," but in a different place, and none of the men are painted, except the boys, who are adorned with white and red stripes crossing each other, forming squares. Rugs are spread upon the ground, and the boys are brought in and seat themselves upon them. The men then form a ring round the boys and join hands, as at the Aychowal ring. Food is then placed before the boys, and the guardians remain standing by while they eat. When they have had enough they are again smoked, but on this occasion they stand on the ground on the leeward side of the fires, after which they go away to their camp accompanied by the guardians. The ring of men then breaks up. If there is any remaining food, the guardians take it with them to the boys' quarters. When these proceedings are over, the women return to their own camp, which is not far away. The men then put bushes on the fires and jump upon them, the smoke ascending round them as at the former ring.

From the time the boys started away from the Aychowal ring till their return to the present meeting place, they were obliged to carry a firestick in their hand when travelling from one place

to another; but from this time forth they are freed from carrying the fire. They are, however, kept under the surveillance of their guardians for some time yet, during which they must abstain from certain kinds of food enumerated by the old men of their tribe. The novices must not let a woman's shadow fall upon them, or on their weapons, or anything worn by them. This shadow is called *tawanba*, and is superstitiously avoided.

Conclusion.—In the preparation of this article I have been obliged to deal only with the most important parts of the ceremonies, and to abridge my descriptions of them as much as possible, in order to keep the paper within reasonable limits for publication; but it is hoped that the details will be found sufficiently full for ordinary purposes of comparison with similar rites celebrated in other parts of Australia.

The extraction of a front tooth has not been practised by the New England tribes for many years, and as there appear to be grounds for doubt as to whether the custom was ever in force in some districts of New South Wales, any further remarks on this part of the subject will be deferred until additional investigations have been made. It may be stated, however, that the whole of the interesting ceremonial in connection with the knocking out of a tooth, as practised by several native tribes with which I am acquainted, has been particularised by me in other publications.

Lying between the eastern margin of the Tableland of New England and the Pacific Ocean is a large tract of country, extending from about the Hunter River northerly along the coast as far as the Clarence, peopled by a number of tribes differing more or less in their dialects, but having substantially the same class system. The initiation ceremony of these tribes is known as the *Keeparra*, which is of the same type as the *Burbung* herein described, all the essential points being almost identical in both, although many of their details differ considerably. It may, therefore, be said that practically the ceremonies described in this paper represent those in force in the whole of the country between New England and the sea coast.

As before stated, the New England tribes are bounded on the west by the Kamilaroi, whose *taurai*, or country, extends down the Severn, Macintyre, Gwydir, Namoi, and other rivers to their

junction with the Barwon, and still farther to the westward. The *Bora*, or initiation ceremonies of the Kamilaroi tribes, is described in a paper contributed by me to the Royal Society of Victoria.* Although the extent of country occupied by the tribes of New England is comparatively small, their ceremonies are of great importance, as affording a connecting link between the Keeparra on the one side, and the Bora on the other; a modification of portions of both these ceremonies being observable in some parts of the Burbung described in this article.

* Proc. Roy. Soc., Victoria, vol. ix., (N.S.), p. 137.
